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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a stream of data packets in a packet switch to facilitate monitoring of said stream, said packet switch having one or more interface devices for servicing an input point, a first output point and a second output point of the switch, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) configuring the device servicing the input point to attach overhead associated with a point-to-point connection to packets received at the input point in order to route the packets to the first output point;
- (b) configuring the device servicing the first output point to receive and process the packets having the point-to-point overhead attached thereto;
- (c) configuring the device servicing the second output point to receive and process packets having overhead attached thereto which is associated with a point-to-multipoint connection for routing packets from the input point to the first output point and from the input point to the second output point;
- (d) configuring the device servicing the first output point to additionally receive and process packets having the point-to-multipoint overhead attached thereto, wherein the configuration of the device servicing the first output point that results from step (b) remains unchanged; and
- (e) only after step (d) is completed, configuring the device servicing the input point to attach the point-to-multipoint overhead to packets received at the input point instead of attaching said overhead associated with said point-to-point connection,

thereby converting a point-to-point packet flow into a point-to-multipoint packet flow and enabling monitoring of data packets arriving at the second output point without disrupting the point-to-point packet flow.

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2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- (f) configuring the device servicing the second output point to stop receiving and processing packets having the point-to-multipoint overhead;
- (g) configuring the device servicing the input point to attach the point-to-point overhead to packets received at the input point; and
- (h) configuring the device servicing the first output point to stop receiving and processing packets having the point-to-multipoint overhead only after step (g) is completed,

thereby terminating the flow of packets to the second output point without disrupting the flow of packets to the first output point.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein each switch point is referenced by at least an address of the interface device within the switch and a virtual path identifier.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the point-to-point overhead comprises a unique interface device address.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the point-to-multipoint overhead comprises a multicast interface card address referencing a plurality of interface cards.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the point-to-point overhead and the point-to-multipoint overhead comprise identical bitmaps, wherein the setting of a single bit identifies a point-to-point connection and the setting of plural bits identifies a point-to-multipoint connection.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 2, wherein said packet is a fixed-length cell.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein said packet switch is a connection-oriented switch.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for converting a point-to-point packet flow from a first point to a second point in a packet switch into a point-to-multipoint packet flow from said first

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point to said second point and from said first point to a third point in said packet switch for monitoring packets arriving at the packet switch without disrupting said point-to-point packet flow, wherein said switch comprises one or more interface devices, connected to an internal switch bus, for servicing said first, second and third points, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) configuring the device servicing said third point to retrieve from said bus packets addressed thereto which use a multicast addressing scheme for routing packets from said first point to said second point and from said first point to said third point;
- (b) configuring the device servicing said second point to additionally retrieve from said bus the multicast packets, wherein the device servicing the second point maintains an existing configuration to retrieve, from said bus, packets forming part of said point-to-point packet flow and which use a unicast addressing scheme; and
- (c) only after step (b) is completed, configuring the device servicing said first point to address packets received at said first point to said second and third points using said multicast addressing scheme; and
- (d) monitoring the multicast packets arriving at said third point.

10. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

- (e) (f) configuring the device servicing the third point to stop retrieving said multicast packets;
- (g) (f) configuring the device servicing the first point to address packets received thereat only to the second point; and
- (h) (g) only after step (e) is completed, configuring the device servicing the second point to stop retrieving said multicast packets,

thereby terminating the flow of packets to said third point without disrupting the flow of packets to said second point.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein the unicast addressing scheme comprises a unique interface card address.

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12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein the multicast addressing scheme comprises a multicast interface card address referencing a plurality of interface cards.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein the unicast addressing scheme and the multicast addressing scheme comprise identical bitmaps, wherein the setting of a single bit identifies a point-to-point connection and the setting of plural bits identifies a point-to-multipoint connection.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10, wherein said packet is a fixed-length cell.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of processing a stream of data packets in a packet switch arriving at an input point thereof to facilitate monitoring of said stream, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) attaching overhead associated with a point-to-point connection to packets received at the input point in order to route the packets to a first output point;
- (b) receiving and processing the packets having the point-to-point overhead attached thereto at the first output point;
- (c) configuring a device servicing the first output point to additionally receive and process packets having overhead attached thereto which is associated with a point-to-multipoint connection for routing packets from the input point to the first output point and from the input point to a second output point, wherein the device servicing the first output point maintains an existing configuration to receive and process packets having the point-to-point overhead attached thereto;
- (d) only after step (c) is completed attaching the point-to-multipoint overhead to packets received at the input point; and
- (e) receiving and processing the packets having the point-to-multipoint overhead attached thereto at the second output point,

thereby converting a continuous point-to-point packet flow into a point-to-multipoint packet flow and enabling monitoring of data packets arriving at the second output point without disrupting the point-to-point packet flow.

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16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the point-to-point overhead comprises a unique interface card address.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the point-to-multipoint overhead comprises a multicast interface card address referencing a plurality of interface cards.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the point-to-point overhead and the point-to-multipoint overhead comprise identical bitmaps, wherein the setting of a single bit identifies a point-to-point connection and the setting of plural bits identifies a point-to-multipoint connection.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

- (f) terminating the reception and processing of packets having the point-to-multipoint overhead at the second output point;
- (g) attaching the point-to-point overhead to packets received at the input point; and
- (h) terminating the reception and processing of packets having the point-to-multipoint overhead at the first output point only after step (g) is completed,

thereby terminating the flow of packets to the second output point without disrupting the flow of packets to the first output point.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein each switch point is referenced by at least an address of an interface card within the switch and a virtual path identifier.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the point-to-point overhead comprises a unique interface card address.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the point-to-multipoint overhead comprises a multicast interface card address referencing a plurality of interface cards.

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23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the point-to-point overhead and the point-to-multipoint overhead comprise identical bitmaps, wherein the setting of a single bit identifies a point-to-point connection and the setting of plural bits identifies a point-to-multipoint connection.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the packet is a fixed-length cell.

25. (New) A method of non-disruptive monitoring of a point-to-point (P2P) connection established in a connection oriented network across a switching node, comprising:

- (a) receiving at a point A on an ingress interface of the switching node a protocol data unit (PDU) carried in the P2P connection and routing the PDU to a point B on an egress interface of the switching node, said P2P connection extending through the point A to the point B;
- (b) receiving a request for monitoring the P2P connection in point A and creating a test point C on a second egress interface of the switching node;
- (c) configuring the point A, point B and test point C for establishing a point-to-multipoint (P2M) connection between the points A and B and between the point A and test point C, without impairing operation of the P2P connection;
- (d) switching the PDU from the P2P connection to the P2M connection without tearing down the P2P connection; and
- (e) at the test point C, monitoring and testing the PDU and other PDU's arriving at point A along the P2P connection.

26. (New) The method of claim 25, wherein step (a) comprises:

assembling a unicast header based on a network address of the PDU, the unicast header having an egress connection identifier identifying the point B as a unique destination of the PDU arriving from point A via the P2P connection, and providing the egress connection identifier to points A and B;

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appending the unicast header to the PDU and, based on the egress connection identifier, perform said routing the PDU to the point B;

wherein after said routing the PDU to the point B, at the point B determining the network address of the PDU based on the egress connection identifier in the unicast header, stripping the unicast header from the PDU, mapping the network address into the PDU, and transmitting the PDU from the point B to a destination address provided by the network address.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein step (b) comprises:

- (b1) checking validity of point A by confirming whether point A is an endpoint of the P2P connection on the switching node;
- (b2) checking whether the switching node enables routing of a monitor test access connection associated with the P2M connection between the point A and the test point C; and
- (b3) if the checking steps b1) and b1) both return an affirmative result, updating a routing table of the switching node to account for the monitor test access connection.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein step (c) comprises:

assembling a multicast header based on the network address of the PDU, the multicast header including a multicast connection identifier and providing the multicast connection identifier to points the A, B and C;

configuring the point B to receive any PDU received from the point A having the unicast connection identifier and the multicast connection identifier;

configuring the point A to additionally enable transmission of the PDU along the P2M connection using the multicast connection identifier after the point B is ready to receive PDU's with the multicast connection identifier; and

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configuring the test point C to receive any PDU received from point A and having a multicast connection identifier of the multicast connection identifier.

29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein step (d) comprises, at point A:
  - appending the multicast header to the PDU;
  - transmitting the PDU with the multicast header in the P2M connection to the point B using the multicast connection identifier rather than in the P2P connection using the unicast connection identifier; and
  - transmitting a duplicate of the PDU with the multicast header from point A to test point C using the multicast connection identifier.
30. (New) The method of claim 29, further comprising (f) tearing-down the P2M connection once the monitoring of PDU's arriving at the point A along the P2P connection is completed.
31. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein step (f) comprises:
  - (f1) configuring point A to append the unicast header to incoming PDU's and transmitting said incoming PDU's along the P2P connection rather than along the P2M connection;
  - (f2) after completing step f1), deleting the multicast connection identifier at the points A, B and C to disable the P2M connection.

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